

U.S. dollars to Mexico routinely varies from the benchmark rates by as much as 15 percent. The profits from these hidden currency conversion fees are staggering, allowing companies to reap millions of dollars more than they make from service fees.

To address these problems, this Act requires full disclosure of all fees involved in all money-wiring transactions. More specifically, the bill requires that any financial institution or money transmitting business which initiates an international money transfer on behalf of a consumer (whether or not the consumer maintains an account at such institution or business) shall provide the following disclosures:

The exchange rate used by the financial institution or money transmitting business in connection with such transaction.

The exchange rate prevailing at a major financial center of the foreign country whose currency is involved in the transaction, as of the close of business on the business day immediately preceding the date of the transaction (or the official exchange rate, if any, of the government or central bank of such foreign country).

All commissions and fees charged by the financial institution or money transmitting business in connection with such transaction.

The exact amount of foreign currency to be received by the recipient in the foreign country, which shall be disclosed to the consumer before the transaction is consummated and printed on the receipt given to the consumer.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this pro-consumer legislation.

#### HONORING AMERICAN ASSOCIATES, INC.

#### HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2003*

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise before you today on behalf of a group of men and women who constantly help others live the American dream. On July 2, civic and community leaders will gather with the friends and families of American Associates, Inc. Real Estate Company, to celebrate the company's 20th anniversary.

For two decades, American Associates, located at 1453 N. Elms Road in my hometown of Flint, Michigan, has helped thousands of families achieve the dream of home ownership. Founded by Randy and Carol Haney, they, along with a staff of 40 agents, have specialized in finding new, used, and luxury homes for their customers. With the help of a computerized nationwide relocation service, the company has also been able to identify multi-family, industrial, and commercial properties, and even vacant lands.

Randy and Carol have also sought to place a strong influence on America as well. For the last 16 years, they, along with 250 volunteers from area youth, civic, school, and church groups, have distributed American flags throughout neighborhoods in Genesee County during the July 4th weekend. This year, American Associates plan to pass out 40,000 flags, and to date have distributed approximately 350,000. This selfless and patriotic gesture of goodwill serves to remind us all to celebrate the freedom we have as Americans, and to

strengthen our pride in the ideals on which our flag stands for.

Also this year, in memory of local resident Private First Class Jason Meyer, who heroically gave his life in service to his country in Iraq, American Associates has supplied a tree to be planted in a local park as a special tribute to the fallen soldier.

Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Congress, I consider it my duty and my privilege to protect and defend human dignity and the quality of life for our citizens. I am extremely grateful that people like Randy and Carol Haney, and the staff of American Associates, make my task easier. I ask my colleagues in the 108th Congress to please join me in commending them for going above and beyond to promote our great Nation.

#### CORPUS CHRISTI, AN ALL AMERICAN CITY

#### HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2003*

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the City of Corpus Christi for the recent accomplishment of being recognized by the National Civic League as an All-America City. As a resident of Corpus Christi, I can wholeheartedly endorse the concept that Corpus Christi represents all the best in an American city.

Corpus Christi is a place where the pace is easy and the people are the best there is. It is peaceful and beautiful with beaches, military bases, high rises and a vibrant business community.

Corpus Christi's presentation included our Juvenile Assessment Center (an organization that helps decrease juvenile crime), Forward Corpus Christi (an economic development organization), the Air Quality Group (Corpus Christi is the only major city in Texas to meet state and federal air quality standards), and a local Junior ROTC team.

One of the central components of our community is our military complex. We often say South Texas is "Navy Country." Four separate bases are incorporated in the Corpus Christi area: an army base and three naval bases. The military presence in the area contributes 20% to our local economy.

Corpus Christi conveyed this pride in our military, and demonstrated the importance of our military community, by incorporating the nationally recognized efforts of the Flour Bluff Navy Jr. ROTC into the presentation.

It was the solemn and excellent presentation of the Jr. ROTC, which has won seven national titles for excellence, and which led the way for the city to win the recognition by the National Civic League as an All-America City.

Corpus Christi is the only city in Texas to receive this distinct honor this year.

I thank my friend, Robin Hayes of North Carolina, for introducing the resolution to officially commend the winners of this competition in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me and the other co-sponsors of this resolution, all of whom are proud to live in an All-America City, in commending Corpus Christi and the other nine cities honored by the National Civic League.

#### THE PARK PROFESSIONALS PROTECTION ACT

#### HON. NICK J. RAHALL, II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2003*

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker today I am introducing legislation to protect the park professionals who "dedicate their careers to preserving our system of National Parks from the Bush Administration's privatization plan.

According to the Bush Administration, the rush to replace National Park Service employees with private-sector subcontractors is a harmless experiment to see if the services provided by thousands of dedicated public servants could be had more cheaply. The Administration claims it is considering only a small number of positions and asserts that taxpayers will see cost savings from this plan.

Unfortunately, this is just not the case. The Administration's privatization scheme is so vast, so unwarranted and so clumsy that it threatens to undermine both the National Park Service and the resources it was created to protect. To avoid this, I am introducing legislation to stop the Bush plan.

The Administration proposes to privatize approximately 1,700 full-time National Park Service employees by the end of next year. While this number alone is troubling, it is only the beginning. According to The Washington Post, the Administration has identified approximately 70% of the current NPS workforce it feels should be eligible for replacement by private workers.

And who are the people the Administration is seeking to replace? According to the Director of the National Park Service, nearly 90% of the men and women potentially eligible for privatization in the Washington, D.C. area are minorities and the numbers in areas such as Santa Fe and San Francisco are similarly lopsided.

Making matters worse, the alleged cost savings created by replacing these workers is unproven and unlikely. Despite paying private consultants more than \$5 million, or about three thousand dollars per position being considered, not a single study has been produced demonstrating even a nickel in savings. Meanwhile, that \$5 million came from funds intended to pay for the operation and maintenance of our National Parks.

Of course, the reason no savings can be demonstrated is that there are no savings to be had. This entire scheme is based on the premise that you can build a workforce of dedicated professionals, with the experience, institutional memory and expertise of the National Park Service, for less money. You can't.

The description on paper of an NPS employee's job doesn't begin to include all of the services that employee performs on the ground. Visitors don't direct their questions about plants and animals only to NPS biologists nor do they wait to ask questions regarding historic preservation until an NPS historian is available. Wildfires and heart attacks don't happen only when full-time fire fighters or EMTs are on duty.

The National Park Service challenges all of its employees, regardless of their actual job titles, to respond to all kinds of visitor needs, and the employees work hard to meet this challenge. This kind of all-out commitment and